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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

نحمده ونصلي على رسوله الكريم

AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT—A VINDICATION

RELIGIOUS REVIVAL

The latter half of the nineteenth century saw a great awakening in almost every faith and religious system. Side by side with the development of industry and the expansion of trade and means of communications in Europe and America, religious renaissance was also taking place in the East as well as in the West. Men's minds had become dissatisfied with the outgrown and worn-out religious practices and primitive beliefs and ideas. A revolt was raised and engineered against organised Christianity by Madame Blavatsky who, in collaboration with Colonel Olcott and Mrs. Besant, laid the foundation of Theosophy in America in the seventies of the last century. Christian masses had been taught to believe that of all faiths and religions Christianity alone was the true one and that in order to save his soul from everlasting perdition it was indispensable for a person to believe in the god-head of Jesus Christ and to believe also that by dying on the Cross he carried away all the sins, past, present and future, of those who believed in Atonement. In spite of the fact that these doctrines and dogmas were

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manifestly absurd, a very large majority of Christians in Europe and America very fervently and sincerely believed in them, and this majority included in its ranks men of very high talents and intellectual eminence. Theosophy rebelled against these ostensibly foolish ideas and succeeded in weaning away from them large masses of the Christian people. A very great and rapid success attended the efforts of the founders. Theosophical Lodges sprang up in almost all big towns of Europe and America, organised Christianity suffered a great rebuff. People began to think independently.

Other Reform Movements

Christian Science was another manifestation of the religious revival that was taking place in the West. Mrs. Eddy Baker founded Christian Science in Boston (U.S. America) in the last quarter of the last century. In India among the Hindus also reform movements had arisen. The heroic efforts of Raja Ram Mohan Roy to liberalize Hinduism were reinforced about half a century later by Keshab Chander Sen who founded the famous Brahmo Samaj. Brahmo Samaj, like the Theosophical Movement, claimed to be a synthesis of the common good points of all religions. The adherents of this movement, professed to equally respect the founders of all faiths and to equally benefit by the teachings of all of them. The Arya Samaj founded by Pandit Dayanand, was at first only a revolt against the social evils of the Hindus but later on took the form of aggressive and militant Hinduism. It directed a considerable part of its activities and energies towards widening the gulf that existed among the different Indian communities. The feelings of severe hatred and animosity that has for years permeated the whole political atmosphere of India are undoubtedly, to a very lage extent, the result of the anti-non-Hindu animus with which the teaching of Swami Dayanand has succeeded in infecting the Hindu mind. But whereas the Arya Samaj has been plainly responsible for the disturbance of the peaceful condition of this country in the past it has awakened the Hindu community to a realization of some of very

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evil social practices that have existed among them for a long time.

The Bahai Movement

In Persia, a learned recluse, Mirza Husain Ali by name, founded a sect which for a time created some stir in that country and excited also the imagination of some people in the West but it has now become relegated to the limbo of dead creeds. There are yet individuals, some of them well-to-do, in England and U.S. America who pin their faith to the unpractical idealism of Bahaullah and his son, Abbas Effendi. But Bahaism as a religious system has completely failed to find a place in the comity of the world's faiths. Bahaism, like Theosophy, was an attempt to prepare an hotch-potch of the teachings of the most prominent religions. But whereas Theosophy, to some extent, succeeded in its aims and objects because it did not attempt to prepare a code of religious, moral and social laws professed to have been based on divine revelation and also because it only confined its activities to acquainting the peoples of the West with the teachings of other religions by placing before them those teachings as expounded and explained by the accredited leaders of those religions, Bahaism failed to make any headway because it aspired, and actually claimed, to be a divine religion. The ways and methods employed by the votaries and missionaries of Bahaism for the propagation of its teachings were not generally honest and above board.

A Materialistic Age

These signs of a religious revival in the latter half of the nineteenth century, whereas on the one hand presaged the coming of a Great Teacher, a World-Reformer, a Messenger of God, on the other constituted a revolt and a reaction against a corrupt social order and a spiritually and morally dead world which that World-Teacher was to rejuvenate, renovate and resuscitate. The world then was at the threshold of a new age, a new era, a new order of things. The spread of light and learning, of new and more develop-

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ed ideas and improved conceptions of moral values, the scientific and geographical inventions and discoveries, completely shattered the complacent satisfaction, composure and serenity of men's minds in regard to their religious beliefs and doctrines. These inventions and discoveries brought with them a new realization by man of his unlimited powers and his capacity to conquer and subjugate the forces of nature. This new awakening of man to his vast and hitherto unknown powers changed his entire outlook on life. He dethroned God from his mind and His place was taken by a mad pursuit of pelf, power and prestige. Man became civilized which meant that his wants and requirements increased and that he must supply them by all possible means, legitimate or illegitimate, moral or immoral, it did not matter. This led the nations of the West to conquer and keep in bondage the weaker nations of the East in order to satisfy their vastly increased needs and requirements and whole peoples became deprived of their birth-right, their political and moral development and growth and progress and about four-fifths of God's whole earth groaned and is still groaning under the heavy weight of the chains and shackles of slavery and serfdom, of exploitation and emasculation with which the so-called Western nations have kept them bound. The East lost its soul through subjection and domination by the West and the soul of the West became cramped and crushed through its own materialistic outlook. He was the master of the whole creation and his own master and he had no need of a God. This is what man thought of himself. The holy flames kindled by God's Prophets had become quenched in the blood of man and the voice of the spirit in him had been stifled and smothered amidst the hurry and scurry of everyday life.

Materialism and Atheism Born Twins

Materialism and atheism are born twins. A wave of atheism spread over the entire world. The rise of the materialistic and mechanistic godless Western civilization and the unchallengeable strong hold it acquired over the nations of the East and the entirely

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materialistic and atheistic outlook on life which it succeeded in engendering was characterized by the Holy Prophet as a calamity far excelling in its spiritual ravages anything that had happened in the past and was likely to happen in future to turn men's minds away from God. The Holy Prophet made a sorrowful reference to this moral and spiritual havoc in the *hadith*:

ما بين خلق آدم الى قيام الساعة امر اكبر من الدجال *

i.e., there is no mischief greater than that of the anti-Christ from the time the heavens and earth came into being till the crack of doom.

Decline of Islam

In fact religion had ceased to be a living force and had been reduced to a mere bundle of forms and formulas, rites and rituals, but the spiritual and moral degradation of the Muslims had reached its nadir. The educated among them sought inspiration from the West than from the Quran and the Holy Prophet, and the illiterate masses had fallen a helpless victim to the greed of the unscrupulous *pirs* and *mullahs* who traded on their ignorance. There had come a great crisis in the life of Islam and according to a saying of the Holy Prophet nothing was left of the Quran except its name and of Islam except its forms, a state of affairs over which every Muslim leader of note has raised cries of woe and lamentation during the past fifty years. Mufti Muhammad Abduhu, the well-known disciple of Syed Jamal-ud-Din Afghani and for many years Egypt's only religious leader shed tears of grief in his journal, the *Almanar*, over this moral and spiritual degradation of the Muslims. He says:

> We have said a few words about our past glory. Now listen to what miserable condition we have been reduced. It is quite obvious that we are to-day the most dishonoured and degraded people in the world. We are great in numbers but are without any honour or respect. We have become devoid of all good moral qualities; of piety, generous-mindedness and chastity; of will, determin-

* *Mishkat*, page 473.

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ation and high resolve ; of patience, hard work and fortitude ; of enthusiasm, zeal and ardour ; of purity, piety and righteousness ; of justice, fairness and impartiality; of nobility and politeness and considerateness ; of unity, concord and harmony ; of love, affection and mutual regard. Alas ! all our good qualities have left us one by one and we have now completely reverted to our former state. The world has become dark for us again. We are looked down upon as stupid. We have fallen again a prey to all those immoralities from which Islam had rescued us. The only difference is that in the pre-Islamic dark period, all our vices and immoralities were due to ignorance, now all these vices are indulged in in the name of civilization and culture. In those days it was the curse of idolatry that had stifled all finer qualities in us, now it is the curse of selfishness. Then men worshipped stocks and stones, now they worship their egotism and self-interest. In the Days of Ignorance swords were unsheathed in meetings where poems were recited and now much useful energy is wasted on quite trivial bickerings. Then blood was shed in establishing the correctness of pedigrees, now it is influence and prestige, the quest of power and love of money that are at the bottom of all hatreds and animosities. In the days of *Jahliyyat* (Ignorance) people indulged in all sorts of vices and immoralities and gloated over it and bragged and boasted of it, now debauchery and profligacy are practised under the mask of piety and righteousness. In those days robbers and dacoits plied their nefarious trade openly as highwaymen, now people are defrauded of their hard-earned money by those who come to them as social reformers, religious teachers and political leaders. In short, we have relapsed into that morass of vices and depravities from which Islam had taken us out. Neither was God worshipped then, nor is He adored now.

Establishment of British Rule in India and its Aftermath

So it is no exaggeration to say that darkness had enshrouded the entire face of the earth. Religion and morality perhaps for centuries were never at a lower ebb than in the latter half of the last century. The East as well as the West had become spiritually and morally bankrupt. But nowhere this decline in morals and the tendency away from religion were more

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marked than among the Muslims and of all Muslims among those of India, the country where humanity's great Teacher and Deliverer appeared in the nick of time, an impartial appraisal of whose life-work forms the subject of this article. The establishment of the British rule in India on the ashes of the Mughal Empire was an event of first rate importance in the life of the Indian Muslim Community. It cast a great gloom over them. The future became dark for them. To the Hindus this change meant only a change of masters. For many centuries they had become accustomed to foreign rule, and for this reason had gained a mastery in adjusting themselves to new conditions. With characteristic subtlety and swiftness they grasped the change of the times, notwithstanding the strong conservatism of their social system. But to the Muslims it meant a different thing. From the ruling race they became a ruled race, on the same level as the Hindus, to whom they had always felt themselves superior in position. English rule had risen out of the general dissolution of the old Mughal Empire. This dissolution not only affected the political conditions, but also the cultural and religious conditions of the country. Power, wealth and influence fled from those classes of Muslims who during centuries had learnt to consider their superior position in the country as a natural thing. A general sullennes of mind one pervaded the whole community.*

Muslim Masses and Intelligentsia Disgruntled

Thus it was that both Muslim masses and intelligentsia in India had become severely disappointed and disgruntled and almost despaired of their future. Muslim writers and poets of the time shed tears of grief and sorrow over a change that had changed the erstwhile rulers of the land into hewers of wood and drawers of water. Hali in his *Musaddas* (a sextet) describes the ancient glories of the Muslim Empire in Spain and Baghdad, its progressiveness in learning and tolerance of spirit, and contrasts it

Islam in India To-day. by H. Kraemer

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with the then prevailing decadence and lethargy, appealing to the Indian Muslims to awake and reform themselves. Here is a rough English rendering of two of his well-known couplets:

> " If there could be found a hill so high as to command a full view of the whole world and a wise man were to climb it to have a glance over nature's panorama, he would see sights of vastly different nature..... ..... Then he would see a garden wholly deserted and desolate, covered all over with dust and dirt, which freshness and bloom have completely forsaken and all the green branches of whose trees have fallen after having withered and dried up, a garden quite incapable of growing new trees and yielding fresh fruit, whose trees are fit only to be burnt as fuel, a garden where even the timely life-giving rain serves as a deadly poison and which even clouds laden with water are incapable of making green. It is there that one continuously hears a voice singing in doleful dirges: 'This is the desolate and deserted garden of Islam' ".

One more quotation on the all round degradation of the Indian Muslims after the Mutiny will be found to be relevant and useful. In his work on the influence of English on Urdu literature S. Abdul Latif writes of this period:

> " There was now no place in Northern India to which the Muslims could turn for help or support. Bereft of power and wealth they presented a pathetic spectacle. The gradual disintegration of their religious and social life in no small measure contributed to their political downfall ..... They disdained the pursuit of trade, commerce or industry. Their mainstay was administration and as they began to lose their political power their economic condition grew steadily worse."*

Humanity's Great Teacher Appears

It was at such a time of great moral depression and spiritual decline when both the Muslim masess and intellectual classes in India had despaired of their future and anxiously waited for the coming of a Divine Leader in fulfilment of the prophecies of their Prophet

Whither Islam, pp. 190-191.

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to lead them out of the Valley of the Shadow of Death that their deliverer, their long and anxiously—awaited Messiah and Mahdi appeared in the person of Hazrat Ahmad of Qadian. The marvellous and magnificent work to which we will presently refer which this great Teacher did, alone constitutes an irrefutable proof of the truth of his mission but the need of the time and a great mass of most authentic and reliable traditions lend an unchallengeable support to the truth of his claims and incontestibly establish the unassailability of his position.

Position of Hadith

There has recently arisen a school of thought among the Muslims who deny altogether the appearance of any such Reformer among the Muslims who was to be known as the Promised Messiah and *Mahdi*. But such an idea fortunately rejected by the large mass of Muslim theological opinion and held only by a few irreligious, materially-minded and West-ridden individuals if allowed to grow and develop, is calculated to shake the very foundations of Islam. The Quran, the *Sunnat* (Practice) and the *Hadith* are the three main sources of Islam. If you reject or deny any one of these, you reject Islam itself. The Quran is the revealed Word of God and the *Hadith* the collection of the sayings of the Holy Prophet who was the Quran-incarnate. The Quran is the Law, the *Sunnat* the practical demonstration of that Law by the bearer of the Law himself and *Hadith* is the exposition of the same Law by him. If you refuse to submit to the authority of the *Hadith*, you refuse to accept the exposition of the Quran by the bringer of the Quran. This is a position which no true Muslim can dare accept. It is possible to reject this or that *hadith* because a large mass of false and fictitious sayings purported to be the Holy Prophet's traditions have found their way into the books of *Hadith* but if you recognize the very high position the *Hadith* possess in the Islamic theological literature and treat the teachings, prophecies and explanations of the Quranic injunctions and ordinances embodied in them with the respect they deserve,

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then you cannot justifiably reject as spurious or treat as of no account an *hadith* about the authenticity and reliability of which there are no two opinions; and the many traditions containing the prophecy about the coming of the Promised Messiah are of that kind. Not only the prophecy about the appearance of the Messiah is to be found in all the six books of *Hadith* known as the *Sihah Sitta* (the authentic Six) whose reliability is considered by the consensus of Muslim scholarly opinion as beyond doubt and dispute but large chapters have been devoted to dealing with the time and manner of his coming, the signs that would precede and attend his advent, with his special mission, his physical appearance, his parentage and with even the place of his birth.

Signs of His Time

For instance, it was said that the Promised Messiah would appear at a time when banking would flourish, wine would be used in large quantities, the number of women would become larger than that of men, women would wear clothes so fine that their bodies would be visible through them and that they would be employed largely as shop-assistants and in offices, Christian Government would extend their territories and the political powers of Islam would greatly diminish, less deference would be paid to parents; new modes of conveyance would be discovered; inanimate things would speak; newspapers, pamphlets and books would be published on a very large scale; many canals would be dug; zoological gardens would become numerous; the science of astronomy would considerably develop; many new mines would be discovered and the earth would throw up its hidden treasures; two seas would be united by means of a canal, on one side of which would be found coral and on the other pearls, and large ships would pass constantly through this canal and remind people of the favours and blessings of God; kings would come to grief and labourers would have a chance of governing; the police would increase and order would be maintained inside different countries. It was also said

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that in the time of the Promised Messiah the moon would suffer an eclipse on the 13th and the sun on the 28th of the lunar month of Ramadan and this phenomenon was declared to be unique in the history of mankind. It never occurred in the time of any prophet in the past and was never to occur in the time of any other claimant to prophethood in future. It had also been said that the *Mahdi* would belong to a family of landholders and that he would be born in a village called Kadaa and that he would suffer from two maladies, one affecting the upper half of his body and the other affecting the lower half, that he would be affected by a slight stammer in his speech and that he would have wheaten complexion and straight hair. It was also said that his marriage and the offspring through that marriage would be of prophetical bearing. Again, the Holy Prophet said that the Promised Messiah would be born on a Friday and would be a twin and would be of Persian origin. These and many other prophecies were literally fulfilled in the time and person of the Founder of the Ahamdiyya Movement. The Quran and the Holy Prophet are so overwhelmingly in favour of his claims that it is not possible to reject him without denying and rejecting the Quran and the Prophet and even if there had been no other justification for Prophet Ahmad to found and establish a new community, the fact that a Reformer was promised to the Muslims who was to be known as the Promised Messiah and *Mahdi* and that he was that Reformer, in itself is a sufficient *raison d'etre* of the Ahmadiyya Movement.

Raison d'etre of The Ahmadiyya Movement

It is sometime suggested that the Muslims did not need a divine Reformer since all the work of reformation needed could be and was actually done by the leaders already existing among the Muslims,—Sir Sayyad Ahmad and Sayyad Jamal-ud-Din Afghani and the band of their devoted followers.

It is difficult not to acknowledge the great services that the two Sayyads did to the Muslims. They

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did indeed create a revolt against the evils from which the Muslims suffered and were, to a certain extent, successful in undoing the harm done by them. But the malady of Islam lay much deeper. It was that both the Muslim masses and intelligentsia had begun to regard Islam as a spent force. The masses seeing the rapid decay of the political power of Islam and having been ground down to extreme poverty and social misery had lost all hope and finding themselves quite unable to keep abreast with sister communities in the race to lead a respectful life waited for the Messiah and *Mahdi* to come. The Muslim intelligentsia had increasingly begun to regard Islam as a system which was fit only for the illiterate Arabs in the seventh century of the Christian era and which was not at all suited to the needs of the highly-developed human society in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They did not say that in so many words. But in their heart of hearts they had become convinced of this fact.

The rise of new social and economic problems and the attitude of mind which was the result of the materialistic outlook on life engendered by the mechanistic Western civilization had made the leaders of the social and religious Muslim thought in the latter half of the nineteenth century take a defensive position in regard to the objections that were constantly raised against a great many principles and laws of Islam. Islamic injunctions about polygamy, purdah, divorce, interest, about Islamic doctrine of *Jihad*, Islamic belief in angels and life after death, plurality of the Holy Prophet's wives, his expeditions against his opponents, Islamic conception of *Wahi* (revelation); all were bitterly attacked by Christian and Arya Samaj preachers, padres, and publicists. At that time Islam was engaged in a life-and-death struggle. Sir Sayyad, the late Sayyad Amir Ali, Mr. Khuda Bakhsh, Maulvi Chiragh Ali, the late Maulana Shibli—all these Muslim leaders wholly succumbed to this tearing and shattering Western criticism characterizing some of the Islamic principles and practices as primitive and meant only for the Arabs, denying altogether their universal application and

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interpreting others in a manner which was completely foreign to the whole spirit of Islam. The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement shed this defeatist mentality and Islam came to its own by the brave and courageous defence he put up and by the beautiful and wholly unassailable exposition he gave to the Islamic teaching. Giving up the weak-kneed policy of Sir Sayyad school of thought he adopted an aggressive attitude and like a great general of Islam maintained and proved in his masterly works, which deal with all sorts of religious problems, that wherever Islam and Western civilization were in conflict, it was Western civilization and not Islam that was at fault. It is not a remote possibility that if God had not raised Ahmad, the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, the apologetic tone that Sir Sayyad school of thought had adopted to meet the challenge of the so-called Western scientfic learning would have changed Islam out of all recognition. When we study the writings of these weak advocates of Islam this fact becomes quite clear. Sir Sayyad was so much overawed by Western criticism that he practically denied revelation, the efficacy of prayer, angels, prophecy and supernatural signs and described the Quran as a dry book devoid of the miraculous and " went so far as to place Christian Bible on a par with the Quran as no less, and no more, inspired, holding that the Bible has not been corrupted by the Christians. One of his watch-words was, " Reason alone is sufficient guide."*

Maulvi Chiragh Ali was one of Sir Sayyad's great admirers and friends and a writer of note in those days. About him we are told that he possessed 'a far greater amount of daring and spiritual freedom than the present-day Indian apologetic writers ever show.' He defended in his book ***The proposed political, legal and social reforms in the Ottoman Empire and other Muhammadan States***, a position exactly identical with that maintained in the universally-condemned book of the Egyptian Sheikh Abdur-Razzaq *Al-hukm fil-Islam* (Government in Islam) *viz.*, that

*The Ahmadiya Movement, H. A. Walter.

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Muhammad never intended to reveal unchangeable rules for civil and political institutions and that he had only given to the world spiritual doctrines and moral reforms.*

Syed Amir Ali, a well-known exponent of Sir Sayyad school of thought who lived in England for many years and wrote several very useful books, too, like his great leader was terribly frightened by Western citicism of Islamic principles and laws and felt the necessity of adapting them to the current Western thought. Let us see what Christian writers think of his defence of Islam. "Syed Amir Ali makes bold to state that the Quran is the product of the mind of Muhammad, and reflects the processes of development of his religious consciousness."† About polygamy the same distinguished writer says: "Polygamy in the present day is an adulterous connection and is contrary to the spirit of Islam."‡

Another equally highly-placed Muslim writer speaking of the Quran calls it "a collection of sermons, commands and instructions, delivered and issued from time to time as occasion required .....and you have to interpret the Quran quite naturally as any other book or historic document."§ The late Professor Salah-ud-Din Khuda Bakhsh of Calcutta was another modern-minded exponent of Islam who defended Islam and the Holy Prophet 'in his own way.' He says, "We do not despair of human progress .. ..nor have we any sympathy with the class of men (unfortunately the larger portion of our community belongs to that class) who take it for granted that our religion and our social system admit of no corrective, or call for no improvement. Such a theory were subversive of all progress ... It would be the merest affection to contend that religious and social systems, bequeathed to us thirteen hundred years ago, should now be

*_Islam in India_, by Hendrik Kræmer.

†_Indian Islam_, by Dr. Murray, T. Titus, D.D., quoting from _The Spirit of Islam_, pp. 398, 399.

‡_The Spirit of Islam_, Calcutta, 1902, p. 216.

§Sir Ahmad Hussain, _op. cit_, 39, 83.

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adopted in their entirety without the slightest change or alteration."‡

The same gentleman has further said :

"Islam must be on the defensive against the West. We must use the weapons forged in the West. Everywhere we see Western education, Western methods, Western ways of agitation, Western social customs and the Western call for freedom and self-determination. But this wave of Westernism has not awakened Islam but drawn us closer to it. Alzurkani said 200 years ago, 'Decision may be made in the measure of new circumstances.' Such is the true spirit of Islam. Universalism is its key, the Unity of God its battle-cry ; the brotherhood of man its cardinal tenet ; a will to conquer its aspiration. The rest is the creation of theology and not essential to Islam."*

Brave Defence of Islam

Such were the leaders of Muslim religious thought who had taken upon themselves the defence of Islam and still it is said that Islam was safe in their hands and no divinely-inspired teacher was needed to put up a true and real defence of Islam and by dispelling the clouds that had darkened its beautiful face, present it to the world in a form incapable of being assailed. That primitive Islam which was introduced into the world and preached by the Holy Prophet is now being preached in its pristine purity without any modification, alteration or even adaptation by the followers of that great divine Teacher—Hazrat Ahmad—from the heart of that very country from which emanated the criticism which intimidated Sir Sayyad Ahmad, Sayyad Amir Ali and others of their way of thinking into interpreting the laws and principles of Islam in a manner wholly conflicting with its spirit and essence. Before Ahmad came Islam was discredited, defeated and deserted and was offering a very feeble defence to the gashing and tearing Western criticism. He regenerated and revitalized it into an invincible, progressive and conquering faith which has nothing to fear from any criticism and upon whose laws and principles

‡*Essays Indian and Islamic*, pp. 219, 20.
**Whither Islam* ? page 202.

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human social structure is to be constructed if the world is to have peace, contentment and real progress.

Ahmad's Services to Islam

So eminently successful has been Ahmad's presentation of the Islamic teaching that the way of presenting Islam by the Sir Sayyad school has now been wholly discarded in favour of the form in which it has been presented by the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement even by those Muslim preachers and publicists who reject his claim to Messiahship. So great and many-sided were Ahmad's services to the cause of Islam that it is not possible to do justice to them in the limited space at our disposal. It requires volumes to describe them fully. To be brief, Islam as a religious system was dead. The Quran as a code of laws was regarded as a back-number which was fit only for the illiterate Arabs in the seventh century of the Christian era and was not at all suited to the needs and requirements of the highly-developed human society in the nineteenth century. Belief in God was looked upon as the remnant of a primitive mentality. God, Islam, Quran —all had been dethroned from the hearts of men. Man looked upon himself as the maker and builder of his own destiny and in his scheme of things there was no place for such a thing as God and he needed no revelation or divinely-inspired Teachers and Reformers. It was in an atmospere reeking with scepticism, agnosticism, atheism and materialism that Ahmad was born and like a great general of Islam as he was he did not adopt a defensive, apologetic, weak-kneed policy but took the enemies of Islam by storm. He preached and proclaimed and challenged the world that God *is*, that He speaks, hears and answers our prayers, that He has been sending His prophets in the past and will continue to send them in future and that he himself was one of them to whom God spoke and showed signs and miracles at his hands. He represented and typified in his person the revolt of the age against the materialistic interpretation of life which was so popular at the time. He rebelled against the prevailing atheistic ideas and he

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rebelled against the existing immoral practices. He rebelled against the soulless, godless, materialistic Western civilization and against the outlook on life which it was successful in engendering. The old world was dead and he had been commissioned by God, he said, to lay the foundation of a new world, a new order of things, to create a new heaven and a new earth, to give a new meaning and interpretation to life. Man had lost his soul and he had come to give it back to him. This was his life-mission and he was eminently successful in fulfilling it.

Belief in God

He knew that ideas ruled the world and that by their ultimate beliefs were determined the motives, methods and ideals of men in their daily life and he therefore started his work of reform with a virulent campaign against corrupt beliefs and doctrines. Belief in a living God is the corner-stone of the whole edifice of Religion and people had ceased to hold such a belief. They outwardly professed to believe in God but in their heart of hearts they considered it all cant and bunkum or at best did not understand nor cared to understand what such a belief meant. He dealt at very great length with all the different aspects and facets of this most fundamental religious problem in that inexhaustible store of spiritual knowledge, the *Braheen-i-Ahmadiyya*. The argument, *par excellence*, he gave to prove God's existence was that He had revealed Himself during the ages to His chosen servants and that He had revealed Himself in this age to him and he challenged any one who did not believe in God to come and live with him for a few days and see things happening which were manifestly beyond human ken and power. The unanimous testimony, he said, of God's prophets who had lived at different times and in different countries, in most cases being totally ignorant of each other—of those good men who were the originators of all that is good and righteous and pure, who were perfect specimens of truth and holiness, who brought about great moral revolutions in the world and implanted

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the love of righteousness and purity in the hearts of men—that God had revealed Himself to them and they had heard His sweet voice, could not possibly be false. For those who were too much enamoured of Science he would elaborate his theory thus: The existence of everything in the world is not proved by the help of scientific experiments only. There were also other means of doing it. One of these means, and unquestionably the best, the trust and the most reliable means was the testimony of one or more persons of unimpeachable integrity and honesty that such a thing existed. Scientific experiments could not solve the question of the pedigree or lineage of a person. The testimony of the parents only could do it. If we could base the solution of such a vital and weighty question as that of descent and lineage on the testimony of persons whose honesty and truthfulness even was not above reproach, could not the existence of God be established on the testimony of righteous and truthful persons of indisputable and unimpeachable integrity and veracity living at different times and in different countries ?

Those who wished to read God in the Book of Nature, he would argue, were like a person who attempted to see Singer or Ford in the machines they had invented. You cannot find these master-minds in their inventions. These machines can only lead you to the knowledge that there should or must be a designer of them but the machine or the car could not tell you that it was invented by Singer or Ford. Science dealt with the laws of Nature which was God's handiwork. It was therefore foolish to expect to arrive at a certain and sure conclusion by studying Nature's laws that God *is*. Science dealt with physical phenomena and God was not a physical thing. It was, therefore, foolish and futile to attempt to understand and realize God by the help of scientific experiments. God was beyond human ken. Religion alone could help us in this respect.

No Conflict Between Science and Religion

As a corollary of this great truth Ahmad argued

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that there was not, and there could possibly be no, conflict between Religion and Science. Both proceeded from the same source, the one being a study of God's handiwork and the other being based on God's revealed word. They have their separate provinces, their distinct spheres. Instead of being contradictory, they are complementary to each other. Science deals with material and mundane things. Religion, on the other hand, is concerned with nobler, finer and sublimer problems. It deals with morals, civilization, culture, politics, spirituality, and with the question of the life after death. The solution of the problem of God's existence was not within the sphere of Science. It was, therefore, foolish to say that the idea of the existence of God was unscientific. This is how Ahmad gave a new interpretation and a new meaning to some of the most thorny and knotty problems of Religion.

God's Attributes not Liable to Suspension

Ahmad next removed the misconception which had become common to the whole of mankind that the manifestations of the Mercy and Grace of God had been confined to the past ages and that the gates of His bounties were now shut upon mankind. He pointed out that it was a sin and an impertinence to believe that any of God's attributes at any time were liable to suspension. A living organism must exhibit signs of life. To imagine, therefore, that the Grace and Bounty of God were limited to the past ages and do not continue in the present age is tantamount to a belief that God has lost the Spirit of Life and is now left like a thing dead. But He is ever perfect and His attributes are not liable to any manner of decay. God speaks to His servants to-day as He spoke to them in the past ages; He hears their prayers to-day as He heard them in the past; and he manifests His signs to-day as He was wont to manifest them in the past. If God had ceased to reveal Himself to His servants and to hold communion with them and to send down His revelations to them, then life was not worth living and

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that religion which closed on man the door of a living connection with God was fit to be thrown on the dung heap. For twenty long years he declared from the house-tops that God spoke to him, heard his prayers and continuously revealed Himself to him. He laid the greatest stress in his writings and speeches on the point that the door of revelation and prophecy was never closed and would always remain open, otherwise religion was a mere farce and he also declared with an equal emphasis that in Islam alone a person could achieve the object of his life—a real, living, palpable connection with His Creator. This is how he made a great discovery in the realm of religion, a discovery on which man's spiritual life entirely depended, a discovery which far out-shone all the many scientific and geographical discoveries of the nineteenth century put together because it gave a new life, a new meaning and a new purpose to religion.

While dealing with this fundamental religious problem he also explained the nature of revelation. He explained on the basis of his personal experience that revelation is conveyed in actual, spoken words and the mode of conveying is as certain and free from doubt as the talking of one man to another so that a recipient of revelation attains to that degree of certainty which dispenses with any further proof or argument.

Peace Among Religions

God did not speak to him alone, Ahmad further said. He had been revealing Himself to His chosen servants in the past also. He has been equally Merciful and Beneficent to all the different nations. If he raised the Holy Prophet Muhammad in Arabia, He raised Moses in Egypt, Jesus in Judea, Zoroaster in Iran and Buddha and Krishna in India (peace and blessings of God be upon them all). They were all God's prophets and messengers, the propagators and disseminators of the same fundamental truths, though their teachings differed in their quality and scope because they were intended to meet the

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needs and requirements of man at the different stages of his moral and spiritual development. Hence it was incumbent upon a Muslim to believe and respect equally all of them. "There is no nation but has had its warner" (35 : 25) says the Holy Quran and by disclosing this mighty truth from the Quran the true significance of which had lain hidden for 1,300 years Ahmad gave to the world a principle on which alone peace among different religions could be firmly established. By including belief in the divine origin of all religions and the acceptance of their founders as Messengers of God, in its fundamental doctrines, Ahmad said, Islam had taken a most practical step to establish inter-religious peace. A Christian may look upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad as an impostor, and a Jew regard Jesus as a false prophet, and a Hindu who believes in the finality of the Vedic revelation may consider Moses to be a cheat and a charlatan and still remain a good, pious and honest follower of his religion but a Muslim ceases to remain a Muslim the instant he ceases to revere the memory of any one of these great Teachers of humanity as he reveres the memory of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Jihad in Islam

Not only did Ahmad render a great service to the cause of the world peace by disclosing from the Quran principles and laws upon which alone could inter-communal, inter-religious and inter-national peace be built but he removed also those misunderstandings about some of the ordinances of Islam which had blocked the way to a sincere and clear rapprochement between the Muslims and the followers of other religions. Of all the tenets and principles and ordinances of Islam perhaps none has been so cruelly distorted and mutilated by Christian preachers and publicists to suit their propagandic purposes as its teaching about *Jihad* and they seem to be so sure of their ground in believing Islam to be a militant religion quite incapable of tolerating a rival faith as to define *Jihad* as "the religious duty inculcated in

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the Quran on the followers of Muhammad to wage war upon those who do not accept the doctrines of Islam"* and therefore they declare openly that "the spread of Islam by arms is a religious duty imposed upon Muslims in general"†

Nothing grieved Ahmad so much as this deliberate and organised misrepresentation of Islam. The thought that that religion which was the greatest protagonist of the cause of peace, which had laid down detailed instructions and principles upon which peace of the world could be firmly established, the pith and essence of whose whole teaching was peace and that the religion whose very name signified peace should have come to be looked down upon as a religion of the sword which denied freedom of conscience to the followers of other faiths was simply unbearable for a true follower of Islam. Ahmad directed all his energies to the removal and rebuttal of this mischievous and totally unfounded idea. In his speeches and writings, in his discourses, talks and sermons, he explained and expounded this point that nothing was so foreign and opposed to the whole spirit of the Islamic teaching than the use of force for the spread of one's views and ideas. He was especially commissioned by God, he repeatedly declared, to explode this foolish myth that Islam ever was indebted to the swords and spears of its followers for the propagation of its principles. The phenomenal success that attended the proselytising efforts of the preachers of Islam in the early centuries in itself constituted an irrefutable rebuttal of this baseless charge, because whole nations and countries could not be coerced and compelled into believing in doctrines against which their conscience revolted. Freedom of conscience, he said, was humanity's most precious heritage—more precious than life itself. Islam, according to which man is God's noblest creation and to whose life it has attached the greatest sanctity, could not fail to acknowledge and declare the sacredness and inviol-

Encyclopædia Britannica, 14th edition, art. *Jihad*.
†*Encyclopædia of Islam*, art. *Jihad*.

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ability of this his most valuable possession. According to Islam, man is God's vicegerent on earth (Quran 2 : 30) and the king of His own creation. To him the angels in heaven make obeisance and the earth, heaven, moon, sun, stars, mountains, rivers, oceans, animals, in fact all animate and inanimate things have been made subservient (Quran 2 : 34). He is but a miniature world and in his spirit is represented on a small scale all that exists in the outward world. By creating man God has, as it were, enclosed in a nutshell the various forces existing in the world. A religion which has accorded him such a high status certainly cannot deprive him of his inalienable right.

Consistently with its conception of man's very exalted status Islam has recognised the inviolability of this right. The Quran says :

And say : The truth is come from your Lord, so let him then who will, believe ; and let him who will, disbelieve (18 : 29)."

"Say : O ye people ! indeed truth has come to you from your Lord, therefore, whoever goes aright, he does so for the good of his own soul and whoever goes astray, he does so to his own loss, and I am not a custodian over you (10 : 108).

"Let there be no compulsion in religion, for Truth stands out clear from Error : Whoever rejects Evil and believes in God has indeed laid hold on a strong handle which shall not break. (2 : 256)."

Verses from the Quran could easily be multiplied to show that not only does it not encourage the use of force for the spread of its teachings but positively and in most emphatic terms discourages and condemns it. Not a single verse from the Quran or a single incident from the life of the Holy Prophet or his Successors and chosen Companions can be quoted which may lend the faintest support to the idea that Islam views with favour or approval that people may either be cajoled or coerced into accepting it. There had come

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in the life of the Holy Prophet occasions when he could, if he so desired, inflict by force his faith on the people who sought and received his protection. But he never did so. He should not have done so. Even if he were not a Prophet of God and the bearer of a divine message but only a military adventurer who rose to great power and happened to build a mighty empire, he could not and should not have compelled people by force to cast in their lot with him as such people evidently of doubtful sincerity and allegiance were sure to desert him on the first reverse he would have received from his opponents. But the people who are said by Christian writers to have been won over to Islam by force stood with the Prophet through thick and thin. They suffered all manner of persecution and privation and went through trials and tribulations with him and for him, gladly and joyfully. The world's history fails to produce a parallel to the devotion and sincerity with which the Holy Prophet's Companions served him. This sincere and selfless devotion to the Holy Prophet on the part of his followers alone constitutes an unanswerable rebuttal of the wicked charge that these paragons of self-sacrifice, truth and honesty, were won over to Islam at the point of the sword. A more foolish and baseless charge it is difficult to imagine.

Islam, declared Ahmad, was essentially a religion of peace. The whole tenor of its teachings and tenets tended to the creation of an atmospere of peace and tolerance in which people might enjoy freedom of choice and action to the fullest extent and give their allegiance to that religion which appealed most to their conscience and reason. He also emphatically repudiated the foolish classification of the world by some Muslim jurists into *Dar-ul-Harb* and *Dar-ul-Islam*. For the Muslims the whole world was *Dar-ul-Islam* as long as war was not made on a Muslim country and as long as the Muslims enjoyed freedom of belief and worship. Only that country was *Dar-ul-Harb* for them which did not give them full religious freedom or in any manner interfered with the exercise of their religious

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rites. *Jihad* by the sword was permitted only when religious freedom was denied to the Muslims in a country or when war was made on a Muslim country with the aim and intention of exterminating Islam and this *Jihad* came to an end when the above conditions ceased to exist. But *Jihad* by the Quran, in the language of the Quran was the greatest kind of *Jihad*, he said. *Jihad* with the sword shrank into insignificance before it. It required a greater effort and a greater sacrifice on the part of the believers than *Jihad* with the sword because it knew no relenting and no ending while *Jihad* with the sword came to an end when the conditions that brought it into operation ceased to exist. *Jihad* with the sword was allowed only when the sword was unsheathed against Islam and it came to an end when the sword went back into its scabbard. We live, Ahmad explained, under conditions vastly different from those in which Islam took its birth. We enjoy perfect religious freedom. The opportunity to preach our religion is not denied to us. Ours is the age of publicity and propaganda and Islam's greatest need and opportunity now lies in the diffusion and dissemination of its message which possesses a far greater striking power than any sword, gun or bomb. The Muslims have consigned to oblivion this great need of their religion and the result is that the hope of the return of Islam's past glory is fast receding into the dim future. Ahmad, therefore, did not abrogate *Jihad* as is generally but quite erroneously believed but gave it a truer and wider significance.

Life After Death

Second, perhaps, in importance to the belief in the existence of God is the belief in the life after death. If there is any meaning, any significance in man's life on earth, and he is not born merely to eat, drink and be merry and that meaning and purpose is to attain unending and limitless spiritual progress, then there must be a life after our this life. In a world which was reeling under the shattering impact of the materialistic, godless Western civilization and in which extremely few people had a real and living faith even in God,

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the belief in the existence of a life after death was naturally conspicuous by its absence. The nineteenth century was an age of scientific experiments. But the life after death was not a thing which could be experimented with. It was beyond the scope of Science to deal with it, hence people did not believe in it. But such a belief formed an essential part of all religious doctrines. Without it religion remained, lop-sided and even lost its *raison d' etre*. This is why ever since man has been created he has believed in the existence of a life after death and every religion has held out the hope of such a life to man. Like all other important problems of religion Ahmad explained this question in a manner which appealed to reason and common sense. *The first question* that presents itself is how would life after death be brought about? The explanation Ahmad gave was that the life after death would not be a life of the material body that lives in this world; it would not be a resurrection of the body but of the spirit. The material body is good only for this world and shall end here. In the next world the soul would be invested with a spiritual body which would be sensible to spiritual joys and spiritual pains.

The second question is: when shall the life after death commence? The life after death, he said, commences immediately after death, and not on any specified day after an interval of thousands of years. But that life is divided into three stages. The first stage, which is called the stage of the grave, may be compared to that stage of man's life which is passed in the womb. In that stage the soul experiences various transformations and begins to develop new powers and faculties till, like a child in the womb, which develops a soul at a certain stage, it develops another soul and itself begins to serve that soul as a body. In other words, the soul experiences a new birth, and then begins the second stage, which is called the resurrection, and which may be compared to the birth of a child. During this stage the soul begins to experience the conditions of the second life, but its

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realization of these conditions is imperfect like that of a child. After this stage has been passed, begins the third stage, which may be compared to the maturity of a youth. In this stage the soul is able to realize fully the conditions of the life after death, and is then placed in heaven or hell.

The third question is: What is the nature of heaven and hell? Heaven and hell, he explained, are similar stages in which a man experiences joy or sorrow according to the character of the life he led before death. They are not material, for they cannot be experienced by our material bodies, nor can they be described as entirely spiritual for, in that life also, man would possess a spiritual body, which shall serve as a shell for the soul that a man owns in this life, and which will possess much finer and more delicate perceptions than the latter. The delights and pains of the life after death shall, therefore, correspond to the faculties of the spiritual body with which it will be invested in that life.

The fourth question is: whether heaven and hell shall be eternal or of limited duration. He said that the soul will be given eternal life and that heaven shall open to man avenues for unending development, but that as man has been created with the object of attaining perfection, the punishment of hell will not be everlasting. For, if hell were eternal, the object of man's creation would be defeated, and some men would for ever remain in a state of imperfection. Indeed, hell is like a hospital, where man would be cured of those spiritual diseases which he contracts as the result of his actions in the world, and owing to which he is rendered unfit to enjoy the delights of Paradise.*

Ahmad Resuscitated Islam

The above are only a few samples of the new orientation he gave to some of the fundamental doctrines and teachings of Islam about which much

**The Ahmadiyya Movement*, by Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, Head of the Ahmadiyya Community, Qadian.

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misunderstanding prevailed. In fact, Hazrat Ahmad, cleared every aspect of Islam from the errors which had crept into it and presented to the world the original teachings of the Quran to which it was not easily possible to take any exception. Ahmad spent his whole life in the service of Islam. He wrote about 80 books in defence of Islam and in explaining the beauties and excellences of the Quranic teachings. These books contain an inexhaustible store of divine knowledge which shall continue to guide those in quest of truth to the realization of their object in Islam to the end of time. Nothing pleased Ahmad more than when he was engaged in defending Islam and explaining the beauties of the Quran. If Ahmad had not come, the Quran had remained a sealed book and the beautiful face of Islam remained hidden behind the impenetrable veils of doubts and misunderstandings which had enveloped it. He regenerated and revitalized it. He gave it a new life. From a crushed and defeated religion it emerged out an impregnable and invincible faith. So powerful has been Ahmad's advocacy of Islam and so attractive his presentation of its principles and teachings that it is difficult to recognise the present-day defiant, aggressive and conquering Islam from the discredited and deserted faith it was in the latter half of the nineteenth century before the Coming of Prophet Ahmad.

Did Ahmad Disturb Muslim Solidarity?

It is this great General of Islam whom his prejudiced detractors accuse of disturbing and disrupting the stability and solidarity of Islam. This so-called solidarity existed nowhere except in the brains of these deluded people. The Muslims, as would appear from the preceding pages, were before the advent of Ahmad an indifferent, lethargic and apathetic community and were hopelessly divided into innumerable warring sects each calling the other *Kafir*. There never had arisen among them a leader who sought to better their condition morally, socially or economically whom they did not oppose and persecute, and this is why they have ever remained a leaderless mob. To call a people who have

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no leader, no internal cohesion, no agreed programme, a compact and united community whose solidarity the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement is supposed to have disrupted is, at best, a deliberate and mischievous distortion of fact. Far from disturbing the unity of the Muslims, Ahmad carved out from this disunited and disrupted community a body of the soldiers of Islam who know and understand the needs of Islam and know how to fulfil them, who have carried the torch of that inextinguishable and ever-effulgent Light which emanated from the dark desert of Arabia fourteen hundred years ago, to the most distant and inaccessible parts of the globe—to China and Japan in the Far East, to the United States and the southern-most States of South America in the Far West, to the far off Islands of the Pacific and Indian Oceans,—fighting the battles of Islam in every land and under all sorts of conditions, combating the baneful propaganda of Christianity, and spreading the glad tidings that Islam is the only religion which can successfully steer the ship of humanity to the haven of safety, the Holy Prophet Muhammad the only guide to lead mankind on the way to the Eternal City of the Love of God.

"An Instrument in the Hands of Decadence"?

The removal of the widespread misunderstanding about the Islamic doctrine of *Jihad* which had lowered Islam in the estimation of all thinking people and the beautiful and quite original and unassailable explanation he gave of this doctrine led some foolish persons among the Muslims to think that the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement was "an instrument in the hands of decadence." Whether the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement was inspired by the God of Life and Power or was an instrument in the hands of decadence is patent to even a casual observer from its missionary activities to which tributes have been paid by people who are in a position to adequately gauge and estimate the great work its members are doing and to which we shall refer briefly towards the end of this article. We assure those of our traducers

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who think that we are a decadent people whose spiritual virility has been totally destroyed because we do not believe in the bloody *Jihad*, that if ever a time came when, in accordance with the conditions laid down in the Quran, *Jihad* by the sword became obligatory upon the Muslims, the Admadis shall constitute the vanguard of the forces which will defend Islam. The time is not yet. It may come to-morrow or it may not come for hundreds of years or never at all. We who are used to cruel persecution, to social ostracism and even to the most cruel form of death by stoning and who at a moment's notice in most cases without proper wherewithal leave for unknown lands to convey the message of Islam by prayer, persuasion and other peaceful methods will not be found wanting when a call of a different kind were made on our love for Islam. Our Founder has infused in us a new life, a new will and power to work. We are, therefore, determined to change the whole order of things. We shall create a new heaven, and a new earth. We shall make Islam truimphant in the world, we shall brook no opposition, tolerate no check or obstacle. We are resolved to destroy Christianity and that godless, accursed materialistic western civilization which is based on Christianity, to fight to death sin, immorality and injustice. Only our methods are different. We may take a longer time to bring about a new order of things but when that order once came into being, it would not be easily displaced. We are poor, powerless, without worldly means and material possessions. But God has bestowed upon us in abundance spiritual vitality and with that weapon we hope to conquer the world. It is by our method that the real solidarity of Islam shall be created and maintained. The Holy Prophet did not come to build political organizations, establish educational institutions or found empires. He was essentially and above all things a Prophet of God. His mission was to convey the message of Islam and to create a strong and well-knit community to continue his work after his death. It is by this method that the spiritual solidarity of the Muslims can be created and maintained. We have

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adopted this method and we are, therefore, bound to succeed. We are God's chosen people. We are the salt of the earth. The future of Islam depends on us. If we fail, Islam will fail. But we shall not fail, we cannot fail because we have heard the voice of God that the world is at the threshold of a new era and we are decreed to be the pioneers of the new order of things. We say it again with all the emphasis that we can command that we cannot fail because we are the soldiers of God's own Victorious General – His beloved Messiah, and because we have a leader "who is extremely sagacious and intelligent, in whom God has put His Spirit and from whom the nations of the world shall receive blessings." The Muslims are a dead mass, a leaderless rabble. This is the justification for our existence as a separate and distinct organization.

We give below the opinions of a few Western writers who have made a special study of the condition of Islam during the past fifty years to show that the charge that we are an instrument in the hands of decadence is manifestly foolish and absurd :

Western Writers on Ahmadiyya Movement

In proof that he had come in the spirit and power of Jesus, Mirza Ghlulam Ahmad adduced the likeness of his own character and personality to that of Jesus, his gentleness of spirit, the peaceful character of his teaching, his miracles and the appropriateness of his teaching to the need of the age. In harmony with this pacific claim, he expounded the doctrine of *Jihad* (usually interpreted as meaning war against unbelievers) as a striving after righteousness. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad died in 1908, and a few years after his death his followers split into two parties, one having its headquarters in Qadian and the other in Lahore. Both these sections of the community succeeded in enlisting the services of devoted, self-sacrificing men, who are unceasingly active as propagandists, controversialists and pamphleteers. They control an extensive missionary activity, not only in India, West Africa, Mauritius and Java (where their efforts are mainly directed towards persuading their co-religionists to join the Ahmadiyya sect), but also in Berlin, Chicago and London their missionaries have devoted special efforts to winning European converts and have achieved a considerable measure of success. In

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their literature they give such a presentation of Islam as they consider calculated to attract non-Muslims, and relent the attacks made on Islam by Christian controversialists, but win back to the faith Muslims who have come under agnostic or rationalist influences.*

It has always been said that every Moslem who goes abroad is a missionary. In a sense that has been true. But awakened Islam is not disposed to rely wholly on such lay missionary effort. It has begun to organize itself for an active propaganda by trained representatives, deliberately chosen and sent over to foreign fields, to spread the gospel of Mohammad. The group most active in this effort is the comparatively recent Ahmadiyya Movement, which came into being in the latter half of the nineteenth century, founded by the figure now held by his followers as *Mahdi* or the Messiah who was to come. This Movement, maintains missions in a number of countries including England and the United States, and is actively propagating Islam as understood and interpreted by their Founder. They publish an extensive periodical literature in various languages. The better known magazines are the *Islamic Review*† and *The Review of Religions*. The American publication issued by the Ahmadiyya representative in Chicago is published only occasionally as funds permit. The modern era of depression has temporarily affected their financial resources, as in the case of Christian missions, so that their activity has been necessarily somewhat lessened.

Islam, as represented by these modern missionaries, is, as might be expected, an Islam calculated to appeal to the interests and moral feelings of the peoples to whom the missionaries go. The emphasis in their teaching falls upon those things in Islam best calculated to appeal to the moral sensibilities of the Western people. A vigorous defence of the character of the Prophet presents an idealized picture of the Prophet.

According to the teaching of this group, the essential meaning of Islam is Peace, and Islam offers to a war-torn world the only guarantee of world peace. Islam is a world-brotherhood, they say. It binds men and women of all races and all countries into a common unity. All men are brothers, whether rich or poor, whether black, brown, or

Encyclopædia Britannica Ed. 14th, Vol. 12, pages 711-12.

†*The Islamic Review* is not a journal of the Lahore party. It is conducted by the Woking Mission which has no connection with this party—*Ed.*

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white, for Islam raises no colour barriers between men. Islam is the world's greatest enemy of alcohol. Likewise it offers to do more for women than any other faith. The Prophet was the protector of women He gave her political rights and economic rights unequalled by any other religion in the world, and the Koran is quoted as holding the essential equality of men and women. "Man and woman have been created out of the same essence," Women are the garment of men as men are the garment of women." So far from acknowledging any indebtedness on the part of the Islamic world to Christianity and to Western civilization, the apologists of this group, as well as other Moslems, are apt to see in any good that is to be found in European civilization, some element borrowed from Islam. Thus to Islam, they say, is due the abolition of slavery. To Islam the West is indebted for religious toleration and improvement of the status of women. In the political realm democracy as a substitute for autocracy has its source in Islamic teaching.*

This leads us to a discussion of the Ahmadiyya, the Muslim counterpart of the Hindu Arya Samaj. Both have a special bearing on Christianity, because they are aggressive against missionary activity. The Ahmadiyya are an interesting exception to the generally prevailing communal spirit of Islam. They concentrate on religious propaganda and abstain from all politics, preaching loyalty to British and all foreign rulers, because the only thing that interests them is whether and in how far certain situations enable them to convey the message. They are not concerned with Islam as a religious and political body but with the spreading of the universal truth. In this respect they are a very remarkable group in modern Islam, the only group that has purely missionary aims. They are marked by a devotion, zeal and sacrifice that call for genuine admiration, notwithstanding their harassing and bitterly aggressive tactics. Their founder, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, must have powerful personality. When I visited Qadian, where the group is situated that still considers him a prophet (a *nabi* not a *rasul*, a bringer of revelation, not a bringer of a Book, because the Koran is final and cannot be superseded), I was struck by the buoyant spirit of great enthusiasm for Islam. They are not humble bearers of a message, but the proud and self-conscious proclaimers of a

Modern Tendencies in World Religions by Dr. Samual Braden, Ph. D.

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attitude of the human mind.*

The Movement initiated by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad occupies a unique position, in relation to both the orthodox party and the rationalistic reformers represented by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and his neo-Mu'tazalite followers. Ahmad himself declaimed bitterly against the professional *Mullas* of Islam, who kept the people in darkness, who had allowed Islam to die of formalism, who had not prevented its division into sects. He deplored the popular worship of saints, and set himself as a true reformer to restore the true and unpolluted faith of Islam to the followers of the Prophet. At the same time he could not tolerate the rationalizing expositors of Islam such as Syed Amir Ali and Prof. S. Khuda Bakhsh, who were beginning to throw doubt on the Quran as a perfect work of divine revelation, in tracing some of the sources of Islam to pre-Islamic Arabia, Judaism and even to Christianity. In regard to social reform, Ahmad stood by the conservatives. He repudiated the abolition of *purdah*, and staunchly defended the Islamic law of divorce and polygamy, 'spurning any attempt within Islam to adapt Muhammad's teaching and practice to present-day customs in Christian lands'. He frankly regarded Islam as the only religion which not only claims to be free from every error and falsehood, but also offers proofs of this freedom from error.....Ahmad and his followers earned the bitter enmity of the orthodox party, following such severe denunciation of the very people whom he had come to reform. He was branded a heretic, a blasphemer, and an enemy of the faith, as well as an impostor. Naturally, he was excommunicated, and from that time on he and his followers were forbidden the use of the ordinary mosques. Thenceforth he ordered his followers to pray under the leadership of Ahmadi Imams only, and where there were no Ahmadi Imams they should offer their prayers alone. No less than four Ahmadi missionaries have suffered the penalty of death for heresy in the Muslim country of Afghanistan, the last two being in 1924, at which time the uncompromising attitude of the orthodox Muslims of India to the Ahmadis was shown by the fact that their leaders sent telegrams to the Amir at Kabul expressing their approval of the measures he had

* Rev. Hendrik Kræmer in *The Moslem World*, Vol. 21, No. 2. P. 170.

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taken in the interest of the faith.[1]

Along with the development of these intellectual and rationalising tendencies in the Muslim community, a wholly new sect has arisen, which centres around the person and teaching of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. The Movement represents a reaction to the naturalistic interpretations of Islam as set forth by the Aligarh reformers, while at the same time repudiating the authority of the orthodox *Mulla*.....It is this message of Ahmad and his followers that constitutes a very distinct contribution to the new Muslim apologetic and polemic which we are now considering, since the Ahmadis are at present the most active propagandists of Islam in the world.[2]

On the other hand, we find the newest and most aggressive forms of propaganda against Christianity which have ever originated, and from here a world-wide programme of Muslim Foreign Missions is being maintained and financed. This, after all, is the logical issue of the spirit and teaching of Islam under the influence of modern conditions. It is one of the forms of adjustment which have been forced upon the Muslims of India, who are struggling for the defence and maintenance of their Faith in the face of the most disturbing and challenging conditions that the world has ever known.[3]

A quite different history stands behind the sect known as the Ahmadiya which arose in the Punjab, partly, perhaps, as a reaction against Christian missionary activity there, has spread through India, and extended its operations to England, Syria, and Egypt. As the one section of Islam which has made efforts to gain converts in England it is particularly interesting. The Babists, it is true, have also established missions in England and America, but they. though historically connected with Islam, can in no sense be regarded as a Muslim sect. In its general tendencies the Ahmadiyya takes amiddle path between orthodoxy and the rationalism of the *Necharis*, but has certain peculiar characteristics due to the teaching of its founder, about himself. The founder, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, was born in 1838, began to teach in 1879, and died in 1908. He claimed to be the Mahdi, who is generally regarded as the

1. Dr. Murray T. Titus D.D., *Indian Islam*, pages 223—25.
2. *Ibid.*, page 217.
3. *Ibid.*, page 229.

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precursor of the Messiah, but by a development which does not occur elsewhere in Muslim theology, he identified the Mahdi with the Messiah and taught that he himself as a Mahdi-Messiah fulfilled the religious expectations of both Muslims and Christians.*

The Qadian branch maintain that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was truly a prophet and denounce all those who do not recognise his prophetic claims as *Kafirs* or unbelievers. The Lahore party recognise him to have been Mahdi and Messiah, but not as a prophet, an office which, they assert, he never actually claimed and they are not willing to regard other Muslims as unbelievers even though they do not admit Ahmadiyya doctrine. Thus the two groups represent the extremer advocates of the sacred character of the founder and the more moderate adherents who have developed more on liberal lines. But both have shown themselves keen supporters of western methods of education and vigorous in the production of periodical and controversial literature, and thus both appear as active missionary workers for the extension of Islam..... The *Sadr-Anjuman* continues to be the controlling body of the Qadian party, and has shown great activity in educational work. It maintains a flourishing high school at Qadian which is affiliated to the Punjab University as well as a Theological College with a seven years' course for the training of missionaries. Primary Schools also have been established, as well as several schools for girls. It issues a number of Vernacular periodicals and an English monthly, *The Review of Religions*. Besides the original *Anjuman* which is thus mainly associated with educational work on western lines, there is a more definitely religious society the *Anjuman Taraqqi-i-Islam* founded by the present Khalifa and engaged in missionary work. Mission preachers have been sent to different parts of India and, it is said, to Syria, Egypt, and England,..... ..... This missionary society has commenced the publication of the Quran with transliteration into Roman letters which will be "a radical help to the new converts to Islam who have to learn by heart a portion of the Holy Quran to be read in prayers," as well as a translation into English, and very full notes explanatory of the Ahmadiyya interpretation of the Quran.†

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* *Islam at the Cross-Roads* by Dr. Lacy, O'Leary, D.D., pages 99-100.

† *Ibid.*, pages 104-5.

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The Ahmadiyya Movement is the indirect result of the great ferment produced in the religious life of India by three great forces, the British Government, Christian missionary propaganda, and the work of various European Orientalists, all co-operating in bringing western thought into touch with India. These western influences told first on the Hindus and Parsis, and only touched Islam at a rather later date, but they ultimately did tell and the younger generation of Muslims could no longer ignore the solvent influence of modern thought, of the methods of historical criticism treatises and more fully developed and applied by Orientalists, and of the spread of modern scientific enquiry brought about by the establishment of schools on western lines and the necessity of those who aspired to Government employ making themselves acquainted with this new thought. Sir Sayyad Ahmad Khan and his followers came under the same influences and simply tried to readjust their point of view in the light of the new knowledge, an attitude only likely to commend itself to those who had felt these influences and not to the rank and file. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad became, in a sense, the apostle of liberal Islam and presented it in a form mingled with mystical and purely oriental elements which, however, unfamiliar to western minds, are the time-honoured accompaniments of constructive missionary work in Indian thought, and bear traces of the Persian influences which have already pervaded North-West India. Taken out of this environment the movement resolves itself mainly into liberal Islam with the peculiarity that it has a definitely propagandist spirit and feels confident that it can make an appeal to western nations, an appeal which has already been made with some measure of success. If it be thought that this success be insignificant it must be remembered that missionary progress in India, where the Muslim community is now the largest in the world, was slow; it has one-fifth of the population there, and this has taken three times as long as it took Christianity to spread through the Roman Empire. Rapidity of progress is not always the most reassuring sign in missionary work. But the Ahmadiyya movement in England does not only aim at making converts, though it invites them : It is making a very definite effort to improve the attitude of the English people towards Islam and to secure for it a fair and just hearing, a purpose which must command sympathy even from those who are actively engaged in Christian missionary work amongst Muslims, for the removal of

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misrepresentation and misunderstanding can only be a gain to both sides in controversy.*

Towards the close of the nineteenth century another sect arose in India, which exhibits considerable activtiy at the present time—namely, the Ahmadiyya. The teachings of the founder of this sect, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (*ob.* 1908), are noticeably distinguished from the Wahabi exposition of Islam by their toleration..... He claimed to be the Messiah for his generation, in support of this claim he pointed to the gentleness and simplicity of his life as resembling those of Jesus. As Messiah he is also the Imam Mahdi, who, according to the popular belief of other Muhammadans, will appear some time before the Day of Judgment and will lead the united forces of the faithful in the conquest of the world for the faith of Islam; but a pacific and tolerant interpretation is given to this doctrine as to that of *Jihad*, and Ghulam Ahmad represented himself as the Promised Imam Mahdi as bringing in a new era of religious enlightenment.....The bulk of his followers is to be found in the Punjab, but they carry on an active propaganda and have missionaries in England and Germany, in British colonies, and other parts of the world, and have succeeded in winning converts not only from among other Muslims, but also among Christians.†

Indian Muslims have not confined the use of the offensive defensive to the vindication of the Islamic treatment of woman. By far the most striking and the most sustained development of this method has even carried out for over a quarter of a century by the organizers of the Ahmadiyya sect, who have copied the machinery and emulated the vigour of the West in the furtherance of their propaganda. **This religious movement through its own dynamic force has attracted wide attention and secured followers all over the world.** It is named after its founder Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of the town of Qadian in the Punjab.‡

As *Mahdi* the Mirza came to preach not the bloody *Jihad* that the orthodox believed in but a peaceful one, and while not abating his hostility to Christians he dwelt

* *Islam at the Cross-Roads* by Dr. Lacy, O'Leary, D.D., pages 99-100.
† *The Islamic Faith*, by Sir Thomas Arnold, pages 70-71.
‡ *Whither Islam?* by Prof. H. A. R. Gibb, page 214.

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on the necessity for being loyal to the Government established in India. On that point he laid great stress, to the annoyance of some of the orthodox, who considered their loyalty to the British Government brought under suspicion by contrast. Presently he announced to the Arya Samaj that he was Krishna, and then that the Messiah, the *Mahdi* and Krishna were all one. As regards orthodox Islam, the Mirza appears to have deplored its formalism and its saint worship. At the same time he was in vigorous opposition to the rationalists who were prepared to modify their views on the supernatural extent of Muhammad's inspiration and were anxious to bring some of the social laws and customs of Islam into line with modern ideas. Basing his claims to the extent that he did upon the Koran, a belief in its infallibility and divine nature was essential to his success. Thus it comes that his followers have shown special interest in translating the Koran into English and disparaging previous translations already in existence and even imputing intentional dishonesty to translators like Sale. In social matters the Mirza was a conservative and a fundamentalist, refusing to modify any of the practices dealing with women such as *purdah* and polygamy.....It may be admitted on the other hand that there must have been a magnetism and a sincerity in the presentation of his alleged revelation for his success to be so considerable as it was. **What is of more interest to the outside world than the beliefs of either branch and their relations with the orthodox is the vigorous life and the fervent missionizing character of the movement,** which displays an aggressiveness and an intolerance unusual among Indian Muslims. Ridicule and scorn are two of the weapons freely employed in this propaganda, which also quotes from the works of eminent European critics of the Christian religion whenever its purpose is served by doing so. The authenticity of the Bible is freely impugned. The person of Jesus Christ in particular is assailed* and belittled and the bankruptcy and failure of modern Christianity is continually stressed.†

In Java as well as in Sumatra, and partly in competition with Mohammadiyah, the Ahmadiyya movement has been

* The person of Jesus as described in the Gospels has been attacked in Ahmadiyya literature and not that of God's Great Prophet Jesus as described in the Quran.—*Ed.*

† *Whither Islam?* page 215.

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making istelf felt during the last few years. The writer of the previous chapter has given an account of the birth of this movement in North-West India in the eighties whence it spread even into Europe and America. The doctrine of the Ahmadiyya is of a highly ethical character and it directs itself particularly towards the intellectuals.*

"Thence, perhaps, new powers might be born amongst the Oriental peoples, which would check the present decay of Islam or even turn it into new growth, if Europe were to continue along the lines which it is following just now. Who would deny the possibility at least of such a new development, after seeing, for instance, **how movements like the Ahmadiyah, with its strong ethical powers and its no doubt deep religious feelings, are able to exercise a certain influence far beyond what has so far been considered to be the frontier of Moslem territory.**†

The Ahmadiya movement, referred to several times in the preceding chapters, is largely a movement of the same kind (*i.e.*, for the defence of the heritage of Islam, for the establishment of religious seminaries, and even for the furtherance of missionary efforts amongst non-Moslems and nominal Moslems); in gradually discarding its original heretical and sectarian features, it has become essentially a Moslem propagandist Society, though still looked upon with suspicion by the orthodox 'ulama. To it belongs also the credit for the development of a modern Moslem apologetic which, though not yet fully able to handle the western technique of argumentation, is far from negligible, especially in the East and in Africa.‡

We come now to the Ahmadiyya movement, which represents on the religious side a further departure from Sir Syed Ahmad's position, in the matter of religious liberalism, but is a return to it, though on different grounds, in the matter of the absence of political controversy. The rationalism of all the newer schools is utterly repudiated by Ahmad, as we have seen, and there is present here a zeal for reform more analogous to the Wahhabites than to any other modern party of Muslims. It represents a later stage of the reaction to a Christianity by this time established and rapidly winning converts.

* *Whither Islam?* page 287.
† *Ibid.*, page 309.
‡ *Ibid.*, page 353.

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It has attracted those Muslims who concerned alike at the inroads of Christianity and (to a small extent) of the Arya Samaj from without and of rationalism and worldliness from within, turned eagerly toward a leader who took his stand firmly upon Islam as a revealed religion, as being the supreme revelation of God to man, and allowing no quarter to Christianity, pressed forward in unsparing attack.....*

This new sect had no sooner been launched than it met with a storm of abuse from Muhammadans, and throughout Mriza Ahmad's lifetime, he was subjected to bitter hostility from the Muslims of India. In spite of this his following increased. He proved himself an able propagandist, and made extensive use of the press for the publication of tracts, magazines, and other literature. Converts have multiplied mostly from Islam, and this sect is among the most enterprising in missionary efforts in Muhammadanism.....Both sections are equally zealous in the dissemination of their faith, and missionary work stands in the very forefront of their programmes. Both have sought to establish Muslim Missions in many parts of the world, and both have their missionaries at work in England. The Qadian people, the real Ahmadiyyat, have a centre† at Putney, and the Lahore party, who now disown any connection with Qadian, have a mosque at Woking.‡ Two magazines are published to advocate the cause of Islam. *The Review of Religions* from Putney, and *The Islamic Review* from Woking. A quantity of literature is printed and circulated in England and it is claimed that a number of British people have become Muslim. Thus, while Christian Missionaries are carrying the Gospel to Muslim lands, Muslims are organizing Missions for the conversion of England to Islam .....*The Review of Religions* tells us that " regular Muslim Missions are working in all parts of the globe—England, Germany, America, Australia East and West Africa, Trinidad, Philippines, Hong-Kong, Mauritius and the Straits Settlements, and are gaining converts in large numbers, not from the poor classes like Christianity, but from educated and high-class people, in the teeth of all opposition put in their way by Christian priests§.

* *The Ahmadiya Movement*, H. A. Walter, pages 136-37.

† [Since this was written a mosque has been built by the Ahmadis of Qadian at Putney.—*Ed.*]

‡ [The Lahore party have no mosque at Woking. The Woking Mission has no connection with this party.—*Ed.*]

§ *The Expansion of Islam* by W. Wilson Cas, pages 222—25.

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There is no reason to doubt the sincerity of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, and of the zeal of his followers there can be no question. There are no more active propagandists in the Muslim world to-day. Their attitude to theological, ethical, and social questions is on the whole distinctly conservative. Like the Wahhabis they would go behind the orthodox systems to the Quran itself, which they claim to interpret in the light of present-day world conditions..... Meanwhile, notwithstanding that they are regarded as heretics by the orthodox, they must be acknowledged as more able defenders of their faith than any of their contemporaries.*

Let us now look at another great movement, the Ahmadiyya Movement. Mysticism long ago formed a home among Moslems, and in 1879 (in 1889-Ed.) Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of the village of Qadian in the Punjab began to propound to his Moslem brethren his new teaching, in which there was a good deal of mysticism ..... The Ahmadiyya Movement is remarkable for the way it turned the attention of Mohammedans to the study of Jesus Christ. It came at a time when Syed Ahmad Khan was developing western education at Aligarh, and this new and self-styled Messiah sought to find a middle way between the irresistible onrush of the western rationalism of Syed Ahmad Khan and the impressible orthodox of the conservative religious leaders.†

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was born in the village of Qadian in the Panjab in 1839—a man of high Moghal ancestry from Central Asia. Like Joseph in the old Testament, he had from the days of his youth strange dreams and visions, in which he himself always took an eminent part. In 1891, at the age of fifty-two, he made the slightly startling announcement that he was in one and the same person the Christian Messiah, the Mahdi expected by the Moslems, and the ultimate Hindu incarnation. A sect of followers developed. *Their small numbers are no indication of the influence of the movement.* A weakling, subject from youth to diabetes and dizziness, this turbaned, black-bearded, sallow-faced Indian of Tartar ancestry was a formidable dialectician. His delusions were undoubtedly honest. He aroused widespread discussion on his Messiahship.‡

**An Outline of Islam*, C. R. North, pages 103-104.

†*The Muslim World in Revolution*, W. Wilson Cash, pages 65-66.

‡*Young Islam on Trek*, Basil Mathews, pages 136-37.

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Some Foreign Missions conducted by *Sadr Anjuman-i-Ahmadiyya*, Qadian

Country	*Mission*	*When founded and by whom*
England	... London	... Founded by Ch. F. M. Sial, M.A. in 1914, Present Missionary, M. A. R. Dard, M.A.
U.S. America	.. Chicago	.. Founded by Dr. Mufti Muhammad Sadiq in 1917, present Missionary Sufi M. R. Bengalee, M.A.
Gold Coast	... Salt Pond	... Founded by M.A. R. Nayyar in 1920, present Missionary, M. Nazir Ahmad.
Nigeria	... Lagos	... Founded by M. A. R. Nayyar in 1920, present Missionary, M. F. R. Hakeem.
Mauritius	... Rose Hill	Founded by Hafiz Sufi Ghulam Muhammad in 1915, present Missionary, Hafiz Jamal Ahmad.
East Africa	... Narobi	... Founded by Sh. Mubarik Ahmad in 1933.
Palestine	... Haifa	... Founded by M. Jalal-ud-Din Shams, in 1925, present Missionary, M. Muhammad Salim.
Java	... Batavia	... Founded in 1926 by M. Rahmat Ali.
Sumatra	... Padang	... Founded by M. Rahmat Ali in 1926, present Missionary, M. Muhammad Sadiq.

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Some Foreign Missions conducted by *Tahrik-i-Jadeed* (New Scheme)

Country	*Mission*	*When founded and by whom*
Hungary	... Budapest	... Founded in 1936 by H. Ahmad Khan Ayaz, present Missionary, M. Ibrahim Nasir.
Poland	... Warsaw	... Founded in 1937 by H. Ahmad Khan Ayaz
Italy	.. Rome	... Founded in 1937 by Malik Muhammad Sharif.
Y. Slavia	... Belgrade	... Founded by M. Muhammad Din in 1936.
Japan	... Kobe	... Founded by Sufi Abdul Qadeer in 1935.
China	...Hong Kong	.. Founded by S. Abdul Ghafur in 1935, present Missionary, Sh. Abdul Wahid.
St. Settlements	Singapore..	Founded by Malik Ghulam Husain Ayaz in 1935.
Argentine	... B. Aires	... Founded by M. Ramzan Ali in 1936.